

8. "CUSHION" MACE-HEADS.

"*Cushion*" *mace-heads*—their shape is really more like that of a bolster—were discussed in 1944 by the late W. J. Gibson, F.S.A.Scot.² Since then four further specimens have come to light in Scotland, bringing our total up to 26.

One generously presented to the Museum in 1948 by Miss M. R. MacOwan was found many years ago and its exact provenance is unknown, but is likely to have been not far from Braco, Perthshire.³ A feature of these mace-heads was shown by Mr Gibson to be their remarkable homogeneity in size. This specimen, which is quite complete, is one of the shortest, its thickness and the diameter of its haft-hole being average, and its breadth above average (see table below). A markedly unusual feature is that it is not of crystalline rock, but of a fine-grained stone now having a polished surface of uniform brown colour.

Two others were found recently, both in the Outer Isles, thus emphasising their frequency in the far north. Attention to the first, which has been purchased by the Museum, was drawn by a notice in the *Stornoway Gazette*.⁴ The finder, Mr Angus Murray, to whom we are indebted for details, came on it at a depth of nine feet when cutting peat on the low ridge between the Cross and Swainbost

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxviii. pp. 91-99.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. lxxxii. p. 317.

² *Ibid.*, vol. lxxviii. pp. 16-25.

⁴ 2nd July 1948.

Rivers in the parish of Ness, Lewis. The spot—Nat. Grid Ref. 19/512611—is 700 yards south of the west end of Loch-na-Muilac. The stone, as so generally, is variegated. The surface, unfortunately, has largely disintegrated. The measurements, however, are probably little affected by this, though they are close in each case to the smallest recorded by Mr Gibson.

The second was found by Mr George MacIver at 11 Hacklett, Great Bernera, Isle of Lewis, and shown by him to our Fellow, Mr J. G. Scott, at the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow. To both I am indebted for information and the opportunity of examining the specimen, which has since been acquired by the National Museum of Antiquities. The find spot—Nat. Grid Ref. 19/152346—is nearly 300 yards from the southern shore of Bernera at about the 100-foot contour. While a roadway was being made on the croft, the mace-head was found along with sherds of pottery of "earth-house" type, rotary quernstones and other objects. Foundations of structures can be seen. No doubt the mace-head had been brought to the spot as a "find" by the inhabitants of a much later date than its own.

The surface of this mace-head, which is composed of hard schist, with white and grey-green bands running down the length, has weathered considerably. Moreover, the ends have been abraded by subsequent (mis)use, particularly the broader end from which flakes have been knocked off. It had no doubt been rather over average length, and is broader than any recorded by Mr Gibson. What he called the ventral face is much more markedly flat than usual. This seems to be an original feature, and the resulting thickness is equal to that of other, though smaller, specimens. One might otherwise wonder whether the different curvature of ventral and dorsal faces, being normally slight, was not due simply to a natural inaccuracy in workmanship.

Unknown to Mr Gibson, half of a fine example has long been in the Chambers Institute, Peebles, having been found on the Lyne Water,¹ and I am indebted to Miss Bethune for permission to republish it. Highly polished, and made of speckled black and white grano-diorite,² it had been broken across the perforation, probably in antiquity. There are no marks of use, the rounded end being as smooth as the remainder. This example helps to bridge the gap left in Mr Gibson's map between Inveresk and Yorkshire.

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS IN CENTIMETRES.

| Where found. | Total length. | Greatest breadth. | Greatest thickness. | Diameter of haft-hole. | Distance from narrow end to nearer edge of hole. | Breadth $\frac{1}{2}$ in. from narrow end. | Breadth $\frac{1}{2}$ in. from broad end. | Dorsal and ventral difference of curvature. | Rounded edges. | Marks of use absent. |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--|--|---|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Inverurie . | 13.9 | 4.8 | 3.6 | 1.65 | 4.8 | 4.1 | 4.2 | × | × | |
| Braco (?) . | 9.9 | 4.8 | 3.5 | 1.8 | 3.6 | 3.85 | 4.0 | × | × | |
| Ness . | 9.7* | 4.4 | 2.9 | 1.6 | 3.0 | 3.9 | 4.1 | | × | |
| Hacklet Bernera . | 11.9+ | 5.3 | 2.8 | 2.0 | 4.1* | 3.8 | 4.1 | × | | |
| Lyne . | .. | 4.8 | 3.05 | 2.0 | 4.5 | 3.6 | .. | × | × | × |

* Slightly too short.

+ Too short.

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, 1887-88, p. 333.² Identified by Mr R. Eckford, who says such a stone occurs at several places in Peeblesshire.

In the table of dimensions given above has been included the fine example from Inverurie, now in the Inverurie Museum, marked on his map. It may be also noted that, in addition to the examples specified by Mr Gibson as being in the National Museum of Antiquities, the following are actually there: Uig, Lewis; Inveresk, Midlothian; and Fife. The one from Grind, Orkney, is represented only by a cast.

ROBERT B. K. STEVENSON, Keeper of the Museum.